



State of California
Respiratory Care Board

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Inquiry: I provide bronchoscopy services for patients at a medical Center. As part of conscious sedation compliance I partner with nursing to provide nursing support for the monitoring of the patient during the procedure. The nurses are not a part of my department, and therefore do not provide any other service than conscious sedation monitoring. With that in mind: (1) Is it within the RCP's scope of practice to pick up, witness, and stock narcotics? (2) Is it within the scope of practice for RCPs to handle narcotics, or permissible for RCPs to provide this service under the approval of the hospital and medical director? Currently, we call upon the physician to pick up the medications and sign out for the re-stocked items.

Response: In response to your inquiry regarding RCPs picking up, witnessing, and stocking narcotics, please be advised that this is not verbatim from the Respiratory Care Practice Act (RCPA) but, in the RCB's judgement, is highly inferred and allowed.

In response to your inquiry regarding RCPs handling narcotics or the permissibility for RCPs providing this service, please be advised that this is not verbatim from the RCPA but, in the RCB's judgement, is highly inferred and allowed. In addition, the RCB strongly suggests that a respiratory care protocol, as defined in Section 3702 of the RCPA, be developed to establish guidelines for the performance of these functions.

Reference # 2001-C-16